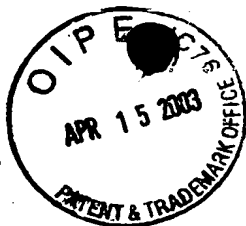


204838US3 CONT



B/BM
10/42203

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF:

:

Yukio KOHMURA

: EXAMINER: LOPEZ, C.

SERIAL NO: 09/842,003

:

FILED: April 26, 2001

: GROUP ART UNIT: 1731

FOR: POROUS PREFORM

:

VITRIFICATION APPARATUS

RECEIVED

APR 16 2003

TC 1700

AMENDMENT

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

SIR:

In response to the Official Action dated January 15, 2003, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1-5 as follows:

1. (Once Amended) A porous preform vitrification apparatus comprising:

a furnace core tube accommodating a porous preform;

a heating furnace surrounding the furnace core tube and heating the furnace core tube;

a first gas feeding means for feeding a first gas essentially consisting of helium to the furnace core tube;

a first gas feed rate controlling means for controlling a feed rate of the first gas;

a first gas discharging means including a gas discharge pipe connected to the furnace